

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 BIB-01 /091 W  
-----027045 171557Z /50

P R 171458Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8778  
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY LISBON  
USNMR SHAPE  
USMISSION USNATO  
USCINCEUR  
DIA WASHDC  
USMISSION USUN  
AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE  
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL LYON  
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO /OR POLADS

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: 1978 ELECTIONS: THE POLITICAL MOOD BEFORE THE  
SECOND ROUND

SUMMARY. IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE NON-STOP CAMPAIGN OF THE  
LAST FEW MONTHS UNTIL THE FIRST ROUND VOTE OF MARCH 12  
AND THE PROSPECT OF THE MARCH 19 FINAL ROUND, THE UNAS-  
SUMING VISITOR WOULD HARDLY KNOW THAT FRANCE WAS IN THE  
LAST FEW DAYS OF ITS MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION IN DECADES.  
A STRANGE CALM HAS OVERTAKEN A WEARYING COLLECTION OF  
PARTY HEADS AND A SURFEITED PUBLIC. THE LEFT STILL  
FEELS NUMB FROM THE MARCH 12 RESULTS AND HAS NOT REBOUN-  
DED SINCE THE PAPERED-OVER AGREEMENT OF MARCH 13, WHILE  
THE MAJORITY, RECOVERING FROM ITS SURPRISE OF MARCH 12,  
IS TRYING TO MUFFLE ITS EUPHORIA AND OPTIMISM FOR SUN-  
DAY. NOT ONE MASS RALLY HAS BEEN HELD THIS WEEK BY EI-  
THER SIDE. WHAT IS THE PROGNOSIS FOR MARCH 19? ONE  
LEADING POLLSTER, WHO ADMITS TO HAVING MISJUDGED THE PS  
ON THE FIRST ROUND, EXPLAINED: "THE FRENCH VOTED ON THE  
FIRST ROUND AS IF IT WERE THE SECOND ROUND. NOTHING  
WOULD PREVENT THEM FROM DOING THE REVERSE NEXT SUNDAY."  
IN OTHER WORDS, DON'T RULE OUT AN UPSET VICTORY BY THE  
LEFT. END SUMMARY.

1. ANTI-PC OFFENSIVE: DURING THE FINAL WEEK OF THE  
CAMPAIGN, THE CENTER-RIGHT COALITION IS MAKING A MAJOR  
EFFORT TO KEEP ITS VOTERS MOBILIZED FOR THE SECOND  
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ROUND. FIGHTING A SENSE OF EUPHORIA BY ITS SUPPORTERS  
BASED ON OBVIOUS PUBLIC INDICATORS OF ITS PROBABLE SUC-  
CESS (A RECORD CLIMB BY THE STOCK MARKET, FRANC VALUE  
UP), THE CENTER-RIGHT LEADERSHIP IS EMPHASIZING THAT  
THE LEFT STILL POSES A MAJOR THREAT. REPRIEVED BY THE  
RESULTS OF THE FIRST ROUND, THE CENTER-RIGHT HAS GONE  
ON THE OFFENSIVE, ATTACKING THE "POLITICAL ACCORD"  
SIGNED BY THE LEFT PARTIES AS DEMONSTRATING THE PC'S  
POTENTIALLY MAJOR ROLE IN A GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT.  
THE ACCORD'S WORDING CONCERNING THE RELATIONSHIP BET-  
WEEN UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND THE ALLOCATION OF MINISTERS  
IS BEING USED TO SHOW THAT THE COMMUNISTS, WHO GOT 41  
PERCENT OF THE TOTAL LEFT VOTE, WOULD CONTROL ALMOST  
HALF OF THE MINISTRIES OR AT LEAST SOME OF THE MAJOR  
ONES. THE PC'S TACTICAL SUCCESS IN LIMITING THE PS' DO-  
MINANCE OF THE LEFT IS BEING CITED AS PROOF OF MITTER-  
RAND'S INABILITY TO CONTROL THE COMMUNISTS AS HE HAS PRE-  
TENDED HE COULD IN THE PAST. THE LEFT'S AGREEMENT IN  
LESS THAN 3 HOURS OF DISCUSSION TO AN ACCORD THAT THEY  
COULD NOT REACH DURING 5 MONTHS IS ALSO CITED AS EVIDEN-  
CE OF THE LEFT'S PERFDY.

2. IN ADDITION TO MAINTAINING ITS OWN ELECTORATE, THE CENTER-RIGHT IS ALSO MAKING AN APPEAL TO THE LEFT'S SUPPORTERS. FIRST, THE ARGUMENT CONCERNING THE PC'S POTENTIAL STRENGTH IS BEING PITCHED TOWARD THE SOCIALIST VOTERS WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE COMMUNIST GAINS. SECOND, THE MRG VOTERS IN AREAS WHERE THERE IS A PC CANDIDATE IN THE FINAL ROUND ARE BEING ENCOURAGED TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT AND HIS PROMISE TO OPEN TO THE LEFT AND TO CARRY OUT A PROGRAM OF REFORM, AS OPPOSED TO SUPPORTING THEIR COMMUNIST ALLIES WHO BETRAYED THEIR HOPES THROUGH

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-----027093 171557Z /50

P R 171458Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8779

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USNMR SHAPE

USMISSION USNATO

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

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ELECTORAL TACTICS. GISCARD USED THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WEDNESDAY AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO AGAIN MAKE AN APPEAL TO THE INTELLIGENCE AND SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VOTERS IN THEIR VOTING NEXT SUNDAY. HE HAS DECIDED, HOWEVER, NOT TO MAKE A FORMAL SPEECH BEFORE THE VOTE AS HE DID LAST SATURDAY.

3. A SHOW OF UNITY, BUT...: CENTER-RIGHT COALITION LEADERS HAVE MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR ELECTORAL UNITY AND TO ENCOURAGE A SOLID TRANSFER OF VOTES ON THE SECOND ROUND. BENEATH THE SURFACE, HOWEVER, THE POST-ELECTORAL PROGRAM AND MAKEUP OF THE GOVERNMENT IS EVIDENTLY A POTENTIAL POINT OF CONFLICT.

-- LAST MONDAY, CHIRAC CALLED FOR A JOINT RPR-UDF STATEMENT INDICATING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE POST-ELECTORAL PROGRAM, BUT THE UDF QUIETLY REFUSED AND THE SUBJECT WAS DROPPED.

-- THE UDF CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN ITS SEPARATE GISCARDIAN IDENTITY AS THE SECOND TENDENCY WITHIN THE MAJORITY, SUPPORTING BARRE AND HIS ECONOMIC PROGRAM (AUSTERITY, CONTROL OF INFLATION). CHIRAC AND THE RPR ARE PLAYING UP THEIR ROLE AS THE "SAVIOR OF THE MAJORITY" AND EMPHASIZING THAT THE RPR WILL HOLD A FUTURE MAJORITY GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PROMISES (ECONOMIC EXPANSION, EFFORTS TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT) MADE BY THE RPR.

-- CHIRAC HAS STATED HIS OPPOSITION TO POLITICAL DEALS AMONG LEADERS (WHO, HE SAYS, DO NOT BRING ALONG THEIR ELECTORATE) TO JOIN THE POST-ELEC-

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TORAL GOVERNMENT. UDF SPOKESMEN HAVE ALREADY SAID CLEARLY THEY INTEND TO OPEN TO THE LEFT, HOWEVER, AND THE SEEDS OF DISUNITY WITHIN A

POST-ELECTORAL GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN SOWN.

-- THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN, CHIRAC HAS CHARACTERIZED THE UDF AS BEING ON THE RIGHT OF THE RPR (BASED ON GISCARD'S AND THE PR'S POLITICAL ANCESTRY IN THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN PARTY) AND THIS HAS BEEN A SORE SPOT IN UDF-RPR RELATIONS. LIKEWISE, THE FAILURE OF FIVE UDF CANDIDATES TO WITHDRAW IN FAVOR OF BETTER-PLACED RPR CANDIDATES IN DISTRICTS WHERE THE LEFT POSES NO THREAT WILL ALSO NO DOUBT LEAVE ITS MARK IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO AFTER THE ELECTIONS. (PR LEADER SOISSON FORMALLY WITHDREW PR PARTY SUPPORT FOR THE FOUR PR CANDIDATES, BUT HE DID NOT EXPEL THEM FROM THE PARTY).

-- SOME CENTRIST VOTERS HAVE INDICATED THEIR INTENT TO VOTE FOR THE PS IN PS-RPR CONTESTS. THIS PECULIAR MANIFESTATION OF OVERCONFIDENCE IS JUSTIFIED ON THE BASIS OF (A) LIMITING THE RPR'S MAJORITY OF SEATS WITHIN THE RPR/UDF COALITION, AND (B) STRENGTHENING THE PS VISA-VIS THE PC ON THE LEFT.

4. MOOD IN THE PS: SAD, BITTER BUT STILL TOUGH. THE MOOD IN THE PS HAS NOT CHANGED FROM THE MOROSITY OF "BLACK MONDAY", WHEN THE LEFT PARTIES SLAPPED TOGETHER THE AGREEMENT THEY HAVE BEEN FIGHTING OVER SINCE SEPTEMBER (PARIS 9822). THE PS' PRESENT CONCERN REMAINS TO OBTAIN THE BEST SCORE POSSIBLE ON MARCH 19, GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WIN THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ASSEMBLY SEATS. HERE ITS GOAL FOR ONCE COINCIDES WITH THAT OF THE PCF. GONE FOR NOW IS THE STING OF ITS HARD-HITTING CAMPAIGN FOR A 2400-FRANC MINIMUM WAGE, HIGHER SOCIAL

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BENEFITS, EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL EQUALITY, ETC. THE PARTY NEVER EXPECTED ITS MODERATE ELECTORATE TO BE SO INSENSITIVE TO THIS CALL. ITS GOAL NOW IS TO SAVE WHAT IT HAS OF THE ELECTORATE, USE IT AS EFFECTIVELY AND AS PRACTICALLY AS POSSIBLE IN WINNING SEATS AND BUILD ON THIS BASE THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE PARTY. TO ONE SOCIALIST MILITANT, THE PS EXTRACTED EVERY IMPORTANT CONCESSION IT WANTED FROM THE PCF ON MARCH 13 (DESISTEMENT, NO NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PROGRAM BEFORE MARCH 19, 200 FRANC SUBSIDY PER EMPLOYEE) AND GAVE LITTLE IN RETURN. IN HIS WORDS, "THE PS PREFERRED DEFEAT ALONE TO DEFEAT WITH DISHONOR."

5. AFTER MARCH: SYMPTOMATIC OF THE PS' EXPECTATIONS THIS SUNDAY IS ITS WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS ITS FUTURE

AFTER THE ELECTIONS -- SHOULD IT LOSE. ONLY A WEEK  
AGO, SUCH A QUESTION WOULD HAVE ELICITED A VARIETY OF  
OPTIONS ON HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMON PROGRAM AND HOW

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P R 171458Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8780  
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY LISBON  
USNMR SHAPE  
USMISSION USNATO  
USCINCEUR  
DIA WASHDC  
USMISSION USUN  
AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
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TO DEAL WITH ITS COMMUNIST PARTNERS. NOW THE THINKING HAS SWITCHED TO THE FUTURE OF THE PARTY AS AN INDIVIDUAL PARTY, AND TO A "SOCIALIST" PROGRAM, NOT THE COMMON PROGRAM. LILLE MAYOR PIERRE MAUROY WENT SO FAR AS TO OUTLINE FOR GROUPS OF JOURNALISTS MARCH 16 HIS VIEWS OF THE PARTY'S STRATEGY AFTER A DEFEAT. THE PS WOULD CONDUCT A RIGOROUS REANALYSIS (AGONIZING REAPPRAISAL?) OF ITS PAST RELATIONS WITH THE PCF, PARTICULARLY DURING THE PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD. MAUROY FORESEES A FUTURE STRATEGY EMBODYING A GREATER LIBERTY OF EXPRESSION AND PROGRAM (A SORT OF "EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF" APPROACH), AND AVOID THE SORT OF TOTAL COMMITMENT TO PROGRAM OR LANGUAGE WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE PCF TO BARGAIN AND BLACKMAIL ITS PARTNERS AGAIN. SUCH AN APPROACH, STILL WITHIN THE GENERAL CONTEXT OF LEFT UNION, WOULD STILL PERMIT THE LEFT PARTIES TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT TO GOVERN, SAY THREE MONTHS BEFORE THE NEXT ELECTIONS. AS IF IT WERE UNNECESSARY TO REPEAT THE OBVIOUS, MAUROY DISCARDED COMPLETELY ANY DEALS WITH THE CENTER-RIGHT. IT IS THE PARTY, THE PARTY, THE PARTY, HE AND OTHERS REITERATE, WHICH CONSTITUTES THE ONLY WAY "TO MEET THE PC CHALLENGE."

6. POTPOURRI:

-- AFTER THE MISCALCULATIONS OF THE FIRST ROUND, THE POLLSTERS ARE LESS OBVIOUS IN THE FRENCH "CLASSE POLITIQUE" THIS WEEK. THE RUMOR MILL IS ONLY TURNING AT HALF-CAPACITY. ONLY WHEN PRESSED WILL THESE PEOPLE ADMIT THAT THE MAJORITY SHOULD CARRY THE DAY BY ABOUT 20 SEATS

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(PARIS 9194). BUT CAUTION IS OUR ADVICE, WITH SUCH A SMALL MARGIN IN A 491-SEAT ASSEMBLY AND WITH SUCH A WHIMSICAL ELECTORATE.

-- IF MOODS ARE IMPORTANT, THEN THERE IS BOUND TO BE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF VOTER DROP-OFF ON BOTH SIDES -- BY SOCIALISTS WHO CAN'T BRING THEMSELVES TO VOTE COMMUNIST AND BY MAJORITY VOTERS WHO ARE NOT AS FRIGHTENED AS THEY WERE BEFORE MARCH 12. A WEARY PARTY LEADERSHIP HAS CON-

TRIBUTED TO THIS MOOD. THE "BANDE A QUATRE" --  
BARRE, CHIRAC, MITTERRAND AND MARCHAIS --  
WOULD PRESUMABLY LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN THAT  
THIS MARATHON CAMPAIGN END. THEY HAVE HAD  
LITTLE NEW TO SAY IN WEEKS, AND ARE MAKING ONE  
LAST EFFORT ONLY BECAUSE THAT SMALL EFFORT  
COULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VICTORY AND  
DEFEAT. BUT THE ENTHUSIASM IS GONE -- PARTLY  
BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT, WHOEVER IS THE WINNER,  
GIVEN THE PRESENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDI-  
TIONS, GOVERNING WILL BE ALMOST AS DIFFICULT  
A FATE AS BEING IN THE OPPOSITION.

-- FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ALMOST NEVER AN ISSUE IN  
FRENCH LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, HAVE COINCIDEN-  
TALLY SURFACED IN THREE DIFFERENT MANIFESTA-  
TIONS AT THE SAME TIME. THEIR APPEARANCE IS  
PERHAPS INDICATIVE OF THE PUBLIC'S BOREDOM  
WITH THE DOMESTIC DEBATE, AND THEY COULD HAVE  
A MARGINAL EFFECT ON THE VOTERS. THE KIDNAP-  
PING OF ALDO MORO AND THE STRIPPING OF ROSTO-  
POVICH OF HIS NATIONALITY (THOUGH DEPLORED BY  
THE PCF) WILL BE EXPLOITED FOR WHAT IT'S  
WORTH BY THE MAJORITY; AND MIDDLE EAST EVENTS  
HAVE LED GISCARDIANS AND SOCIALISTS TO VIE  
WITH EACH OTHER FOR THE PRO-ISRAELI VOTE.  
JACQUES CHIRAC'S DISPASSIONATE CALL FOR A PRE-  
SIDENTIAL REFLECTION ON THESE FOREIGN POLICY

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QUESTIONS OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF THE ELECTORAL  
CAMPAIGN SEEMS OUT OF KEEPING WITH THE MOOD OF  
FRANCE, TWO DAYS BEFORE THE VOTE.

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## Message Attributes

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